

The Transfer of Jolly Beach to Social Security: A Strategic Imperative



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Prime Minister Gaston Browne makes a strong case for the Social Security Scheme to invest in the Jolly Beach Hotel

The Transfer of Jolly Beach to Social Security: A Strategic Imperative



By Prime Minister Hon. Gaston Browne

Background

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda (GOAB) in partnership with our National Social Security Scheme, proposes a strategic investment in Jolly Beach Hotel, to boost Social Security revenues and to ensure its long term sustainability.

The resort presently comprises 315 rooms on 27 acres of beautiful beach front lands, valued at \$67 million. The asset value of the resort will be set off against outstanding interest and part principal reduction of a delinquent government bond instrument of \$330 million issued in 2010. This bond represented decades of borrowing arrears incurred by the previous ABLP and UPP administrations. However, the debt has never been serviced and stands as a non performing asset on the books of Social Security.

Investment Financial Summary

The 315 rooms will be sold under the CIP program for EC\$900-thousand each and is expected to yield \$200 million net of selling and administrative charges.



Our government also proposes to invest a further \$75 million, to build out an additional 200 rooms on ten acres of the 27-acre property.

The sale of these units at \$1.3 million each, is expected to yield a further \$200 million, netting Social Security, an aggregate-revenues of \$400 million in ten years, or an average annual revenue yield of \$40 million.

This compares to investing \$142 million (\$67million+\$75 million) at 2 percent, yielding \$2.8 million annually. Even if, my assumptions are optimistic, and the projected revenue is discounted by 50 percent; the real estate investment would still be superior, yielding an additional \$17.2 million more annually.

Should the directors of Social Security become paralyzed by the risk of failure, and abandon this great opportunity for superior returns? Investments like these are crucial to placing Social Security pension fund on a sustainable footing! Not even government bonds will yield a better return.

In addition, Social Security would have the opportunity to run the hotel into perpetuity, increasing profitability from the current \$4 million annually,

up to \$10 million annually, net of interest payments to homeowners.

The hotel plant could be maintained by the annual home owners' fees of \$1-thousand monthly, per unit, which would yield \$6 million annually.

In the unlikely event the Scheme was unable to operate the hotel profitably, it could sell the property with the government guaranteeing any short fall. This mitigating measure makes this investment safe and sound.

Pensions Schemes Asset Class

It is well known that pension schemes invest in different asset types to yield short, medium and long term returns. Deposits and other short term instruments, generally yield very low returns; currently two percent per annum for savings and zero percent for demand deposits.

Whereas savings and demand deposits are important to provide short term liquidity, the yield is generally below inflation.

Investing a significant portion of their assets in low yielding assets below the rate of inflation, would result in erosion of the asset value of the fund,

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compromising its ability to cover its medium and long term obligations.

This is precisely what happened to the Antigua and Barbuda Social Security Scheme. Since its establishment, the scheme has failed to develop a viable investment portfolio, relying almost exclusively on investments in fix deposits.

Consequently, the deposits were exhausted resulting an actuarial study finding in 2010; that the scheme was insolvent and required parametric changes to restore it to good health.

The failure of incompetence

Instead of making the urgent parametric changes, including an increase in premiums and the retirement age to salvage the scheme; the then Finance Minister, Harold Lovell did absolutely nothing, or as some may say “kicked the can down the road,” allowing the insolvency to worsen. Had he made the required changes then, the Scheme would have been solvent when my Administration took over and would be in a far better position today.

The consequence of his in-action was such that, pensioners had to line up at 5:00 in the mornings, to get ahead of the queue to receive their pension payments which were persistently late. Many suffered the indignity of returning home without their pension payments after several hours waiting.

	NIS establishment date	Expenditure exceeds contribution income	Expenditure exceeds contribution income and investment income	Reserves are depleted
Anguilla	1982	2021	2025	2050
Antigua and Barbuda	1972	2010	2010	2010
Dominica	1975	2014	2037	2057
Grenada	1983	2016	2022	2032
Montserrat	1985	2012	2012	2025
Saint Christopher and Nevis	1977	2016	2023 - 2027	2038 - 2043
Saint Lucia	1979	2025	2035	2050
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1986	2011	2019	2026

Source: Data - ECCU Social Security Boards and taken from ECCB Governor Outreach Presentation

Parametric Changes

In 2016, the Gaston Browne administration “took the bull by the horn,” making the necessary reforms that have now restored the Social Security pension fund to solvency.

It should be noted that the ABLP administration voluntarily paid in approximately \$200 million in ten years and will be making a further \$90 million payment from a bond that it is currently negotiating. This will bring the total payments to approximately \$300 million in eleven years.

It should be noted that the UPP administration, as an IMF borrowing condition, paid in a paltry \$65 million during its 10.25 years in office.

I accept that previous Labour Administrations did not manage Social Security Funds properly. They borrowed, ran persistent arrears and failed to effectively invest the funds to yield superior returns.

The UPP virtually continued along the same trajectory. No premiums or debt repayment for government borrowings occurred during the first six years of the UPP administration, and by 2010, the fund was deemed to be insolvent.

After Harold Lovell and the UPP allowed Social Security to languish; I asked the question - Do they have any moral authority, or demonstrable skill to give investment advice on the sustainability of Social Security?

Harold Lovell has no training in fi-

nance or investment. He has never invested in anything.

Would any serious person rely on financial advice from Mr. Lovell, with his long list of failures to include: four years of economic decline out of five years serving as Finance Minister and eight electoral defeats at the polls?

Rationale for Illiquid Assets Investments

A sustaining pension fund requires a well-balanced, diversified portfolio of liquid and non-liquid assets to support long term obligations and risk smoothing.

Investments in real estate and other non-liquid assets are quintessential hedge against inflation, to facilitate superior returns, ensuring long term growth through asset diversification.

Transparency & accountability

The investment portfolio will be governed by robust public accountability measures including professional audits and half yearly parliamentary reporting.

The Cabinet and the Social Security Board have agreed to strengthen the Board's Investment Committee with additional qualified and experienced personnel and to increase the Cabinet and Ministry of Finance oversight.

All investments will be subject to the necessary due diligence including, deep analysis before the investment is

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Con't from page 3

made and there will be caps on exposure for each asset class, based on their risk profile. In addition, liquidity buffers will be maintained to meet short term obligations.

These will be supported by additional regulations to ensure prudence and risks controls, routine reviews, valuation and independent stress testing of the investment portfolio.

Benefits

The investments in Jolly Beach will result in:

- ☐ Economic Growth and Development: increased tourism, foreign exchange, and increased taxes
- ☐ Pensions Sustainability
- ☐ Hundreds of construction and hospitality jobs
- ☐ Spin off entrepreneurial opportunities
- ☐ Domestic pride of ownership
- ☐ Increased airlift

Summary and Conclusion

Having made the parametric changes restoring Social Security to good health, our government is now investing in its long term sustainability.

Our bold investment strategy will transform an underutilized national asset into a revenue generating engine for Social Security and the people of Antigua and Barbuda.

This is a visionary step to grow and secure Social Security Pension Fund,

to restore and expand the land-mark, Jolly Beach Hotel, ensuring long term economic resilience.

The risk averse pessimists who continue to mire themselves in failure and despair will fight down this proposed investment.

However, the optimistic, competent, prudent risk takers and results driven Gaston Browne Administration, will continue to expand national ownership

of the hospitality sector, while ensuring that Jolly Beach, WIOC and the other existing public investments as well as future investments continue to work for our people.

This proposed investment is doable and would provide sustainable returns.

The ABLP administration will deliver.



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Prime Minister Gaston Browne Leads Antigua and Barbuda Delegation at 49th CARICOM Heads of Government Conference in Jamaica



Prime Minister Gaston Browne

Prime Minister the Honourable Gaston Browne is leading Antigua and Barbuda's delegation at the 49th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), being held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, from 6–8 July 2025. The Conference is being chaired by Dr. the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica.

Prime Minister Browne is joined by a senior delegation including:

- ☐ **The Honourable E.P. Chet Greene**, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs;
- ☐ **Dr. Clarence Henry**, Ambassador to CARICOM;
- ☐ **Ms. Barbara Williams**, Director Development Cooperation, and
- ☐ **Mr. Kurt Williams**, Foreign Service Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The conference brings together regional leaders to tackle a comprehensive agenda that reflects the shared challenges and opportunities facing CARICOM member states. The deliberations are focused on enhancing regional integration, addressing the climate crisis, strengthening economic and food security, advancing youth participation, and deepening international partnerships.

One of the key agenda items is the con-

tinued implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). Leaders will consider new mechanisms for enhanced cooperation, particularly in relation to free movement of skilled nationals, and address the recognition of aviation professionals under the skilled labour regime—a recommendation previously supported by Antigua and Barbuda and viewed as vital for regional connectivity and growth.

Prime Minister Browne has consistently called for greater functionality within the CSME, emphasizing the importance of reducing bureaucratic barriers and enabling the full participation of smaller economies.

As a strong voice on climate justice and global financial reform, Prime Minister Browne is expected to play

a leading role in discussions related to climate resilience and financing for development, particularly for Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

The Conference will examine the Revised Regional Framework for Achieving Development Resilient to Climate Change (2025–2035), a strategy developed to align regional actions with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Framework outlines eleven strategic pillars aimed at fortifying the region's defences against climate-related risks.

With COP30 in Belém on the horizon, CARICOM will also chart its roadmap for coordinated engagement in global climate negotiations. Prime Minister Browne is expected to reinforce the call for the adoption of the Multidimensional Vulnerability



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Index (MVI) and for greater access to concessional financing through mechanisms such as the Debt Sustainability Support Service (DSSS)—an initiative launched under his leadership during the 2024 SIDS4 Conference in Antigua and Barbuda.

The CARICOM Conference will also assess progress on the 25 by 2025 initiative, which aims to reduce the region's food import bill by 25% by the year 2025. Updates from the Special Ministerial Task Force on Food Production and Food Security will inform decisions on extending the programme through 2030, focusing not only on import reduction but also on value-added agricultural production and intra-regional trade.

Antigua and Barbuda is particularly invested in ensuring that food and nutrition security strategies also contribute to rural economic development and resilience to climate shocks.

In addition, Heads of Government will discuss the dire humanitarian and security situation in Haiti, reviewing progress made by the Transitional Presidential Council (TPC) and the Multinational Security Support (MSS) Mission. The region will also consider CARICOM's continued role in international advocacy, including efforts by the Eminent Persons Group (EPG).

Meanwhile, a security update from CARICOM IMPACS will inform conversations around transnational crime and justice, while a new Regional Telecommunications Strategy will be discussed to address equitable contributions from Over-the-Top (OTT) digital service providers, such as streaming and social media platforms.

Leaders will also consider proposals for enhanced governance of the CARICOM Secretariat, including new funding models and possible steps toward greater supranational authority in decision-making—a long-standing issue that Antigua and Barbuda has signaled support for in the context of regional efficiency.

In addition, a dedicated session will be held on the enhanced role of youth in regional development. The findings of regional youth consultations, spearheaded by the CARICOM Youth Ambassador Programme (CYAP), will be presented with the aim of shaping youth-inclusive policies moving forward.

Additionally, CARICOM leaders will receive an update on the CARICOM Education Transformation Commission, established to modernize and harmonize education systems across the region. Prime Minister Browne has previously advocated for reforms that link education more closely with economic opportunity and digital transformation.

CARICOM Heads will also consider updates on applications for Associate Membership from Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and French Guiana. The discussions will also explore the feasibility and strategic value of Community enlargement, taking into account geopolitical, trade, and human

rights implications.

Meanwhile, the Conference will receive a progress report on CARIFESTA XV, scheduled to be held in Barbados in August 2025 under the theme “*Caribbean Roots – Global Excellence*”. The region's premier cultural showcase will highlight the depth and diversity of Caribbean creative industries.

Throughout the Conference, Prime Minister Browne is expected to hold bilateral discussions with fellow Heads of Government, regional institutions, and international partners, further strengthening Antigua and Barbuda's role as a proactive and influential member of CARICOM.

Before leaving Antigua on Saturday, Prime Minister Browne said that the Government of Antigua and Barbuda remains firmly committed to advancing regional unity, resilience, and prosperity, and to ensuring that CARICOM delivers practical solutions to the challenges facing Caribbean people today.

WE ARE HIRING

Truck Driver/Porter

We are looking for a reliable and experienced driver/porter to join our team. The successful candidate will be responsible for driving company vehicles, ensuring the safe and timely transportation of goods, and maintaining the vehicles in excellent condition.

Key Responsibilities:

- ☐ Transport a wide variety of items to customers and through different routes.
- ☐ Comply with driving rules and regulations as well as company policies and procedures.
- ☐ Load and unload items to vehicles using forklifts and trolleys.
- ☐ Observe all health, safety and hygiene rules.

Requirements:

- ☐ At least 3 years' experience as a delivery driver.
- ☐ Hands on experience with operating forklifts and trolleys.
- ☐ Extensive knowledge of applicable driving rules regulations.
- ☐ Valid driver license to drive Box Trucks and Vans.

Suitably qualified applicants are invited to email their applications to: humanresources.ntw@gmail.com on or before July 11, 2025.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY



Strict no-bottle policy in Carnival City to be enforced during Carnival 2025

The Festival Commission will enforce a strict **No-bottle Policy** in Carnival City for the duration of the 2025 Carnival festivities.

That's the word from Minister of Creative Industries, Daryll Matthew, speaking during a walk-through of the Carnival City venue last Thursday. That policy will be rigidly enforced by the Festival Commission with Director of the Commission, Petley O'Keffe, and her team overseeing its enforcement.

Minister Matthew, who is also the country's Minister of Sports, said the policy has to be enforced to protect the country's reputation as the Antigua Recreation Grounds, where Carnival City is located, also serves as an international cricket practice facility.

"We cannot afford to have broken bottles anywhere on the playing area of the ARG including the pitch area as well as the outfield. Just imagine what would happen if during a practice game, a cricketer is hurt from a



Minister of Creative Industries, Daryll Matthew

broken bottle on the field. As simple as that incident would be, it would receive wide international coverage and would do untold harm to the country's reputation as a viable cricket venue with internationally acceptable practice facilities. We cannot afford for anything remotely like that to happen here. Consequently, we will institute a no-bottle policy in ARG/Carnival

City for the entire carnival season, 2025," he stated.

The Festival Commission will have marshals combing Carnival City during each event to ensure that vendors do not breach the policy.

Minister Matthew said any vendor caught violating the policy will have an immediate revocation of his/her permit to operate in Carnival City for the entire season.

The Festivals Commission Director O'Keffe is advising all vendors to serve all beverages in plastic disposal glasses on all occasions to avoid any breaches with the policy.

Patrons are also advised not to accept any beverage that is not served in a plastic glass.

Adhering to the policy has much importance not only for Carnival 2025, but for the ARG's reputation as an international cricket practice venue, now and in the future.





CIBC CARIBBEAN ARRANGES OVER US\$1.5 BILLION IN TRANSACTIONS

Against the backdrop of shifting market dynamics and elevated interest rates, CIBC Caribbean successfully arranged US\$1.5 billion in transactions during the past year, further strengthening its reputation as a trusted financial partner for corporate and sovereign clients across the Caribbean. Our unwavering commitment to delivering world-class financial solutions continues to drive transformative projects, with a particular emphasis on sustainable finance, infrastructure growth and strategic regional development.

Our award-winning Corporate and Investment Banking team remains the largest and most experienced in the region, offering bespoke financial solutions and strategic advice tailored to our clients' evolving needs. Through innovation and collaboration, we are proud to play a pivotal role in fostering sustainable economic growth throughout the Caribbean.

Showcased below are notable transactions executed during the past year.

 Sandals Resorts International Syndicated Term Facility Undisclosed Amount Lead Arranger & Lender April 2025 Hospitality	 Sable International Finance Ltd. Senior Term Loan & Revolving Credit Facility US\$1.99 Billion Lead Arranger & Lender February 2025 Telecommunications	 Nassau Cruise Port Ltd. Senior Term Loan Facilities US\$82 Million Lead Arranger & Lender December 2024 Ports & Logistics	 Government of Barbados Sustainability Linked Term Loan US\$300 Million Sole Arranger, Lender and Sustainability Structuring Agent November 2024 Sovereign
 Government of the Virgin Islands Senior Term Loan Facility US\$100 Million Lead Arranger & Lender October 2024 Sovereign	 Westend Properties Limited Term Loan US\$75 Million Joint Arranger & Co-Lender September 2024 Hospitality	 Aeropuertos Dominicanos Siglo XXI S.A. Senior Term Loan Facility US\$400 Million Joint Arranger & Lender July 2024 Ports & Logistics	 Health City Cayman Islands Ltd. Senior Term Loan Facility Undisclosed Amount Lead Arranger & Lender June 2024 Healthcare
 Bahamasair Holdings Ltd. Senior Term Loan Facility BSD\$62 Million Lead Arranger & Lender May 2024 Airlines	 Caribbean Utilities Company Senior Unsecured Green Notes due 2039, 2049 US\$80 Million Sole Placement Agent May 2024 Utilities	 JEM TCI Holdings Ltd Senior Term Loan Facility US\$50 Million Lead Arranger & Lender May 2024 Hospitality	 Antigua and Barbuda Airport Authority Senior Term Loan Facility Undisclosed Amount Lead Arranger & Lender March 2024 Airports

Our team is ready to partner with you on your next transaction. Let's talk today.

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Warm send-off for Caleb Gardiner



Former government senator, now diplomat, Caleb Gardiner, is taking up a new assignment following his posting at the Antigua and Barbuda High Commission in London.

Gardiner, whose leadership qualities were recognised by senior members of the Gaston Browne Administration, will take up the role as Third Secretary at the High Commission, headed by High Commissioner, Karen-Mae Hill.

Last Friday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a brief send-off ceremony

for Gardiner where he was led by Foreign Minister, E.P. Chet Greene, speaker after speaker offered him words of congratulations and best wishes as he embarks on this new journey in what could be a career and life-changing assignment.

During the exercise, Minister Greene and Permanent Secretary, Ambassador Dr. Clarence Pilgrim both presented Gardiner with parting gifts on behalf of the staff of the ministry.

Caleb Gardiner's journey is a powerful testament to purpose-driven

leadership. From serving as Guild President at the University of the West Indies Five Islands Campus to becoming an inaugural member of the United Nations Youth Advocacy Group for Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, Caleb has consistently used his voice to uplift others.

His appointment as one of Antigua and Barbuda's youngest Senators marked a bold chapter of advocacy for youth, education, and good governance. Through countless community initiatives, he remained grounded in service.

Now stepping into his role as a diplomat, Caleb continues to represent his nation with passion, proving that true leadership begins with heart and a commitment to people.

ANTIGUA
AND BARBUDA
The beach is just the beginning...

Antigua Barbuda
FESTIVALS
COMMISSION



JAM SESSION

**JUL
10
7PM**
REDCLIFFE STREET IN FRONT OF
NATIONAL FESTIVALS OFFICE

HOSTED BY **IBIS & DYMOND**

HAUTION BAND | VENOM X BAND | DJ CRUMPZ
SOCA ARTISTES AND CALYPSONIANS



2025 Queen of Carnival delegates launch food drive to benefit Sunshine Home for Girls



QOC Delegates



Major Violet Ezeh of the Salvation Army Sunshine Home for Girls



QOC at First Choice



QOC at Price Choppers

The Queen of Carnival 2025 delegates, fondly known as the Celestial Five, embarked on a heartfelt mission last Friday, hosting a community food drive to benefit The Salvation Army Sunshine Home for Girls.

While the Sunshine Home has served as a pillar of support for young girls over the years, it is often overlooked because of the misconception that their needs are always met. Recognizing this, the Celestial Five decided to do something different this Carnival season, organizing support for the girls who call the Sunshine Home their home.

Throughout the day, the

delegates visited three key locations across four supermarkets to collect dry goods and essential food items from generous shoppers and supporters:

- **First Stop:** Between Price Choppers and Cost Pro, Woods Mall
- **Second Stop:** Epicurean Supermarket
- **Final Stop:** First Choice Supermarket

A substantial quantity of dry goods, including rice, pasta, cereals, oatmeal, and other non-perishable staples, was collected during the drive. Each delegate expressed how rewarding it was to see the community respond so positively to

their call for support.

The food donations will be formally presented to The Salvation Army Sunshine Home for Girls on July 12, 2025, marking the culmination of this charitable effort.

The Celestial Five are, **Kia Kirwan** – Miss ACB Caribbean, **Kaaliyha Guiste** – Miss Antigua Masonry Products, **Danijha Simon** – Miss Furniture Gallery, **Abigail Piper** – Miss Board Walk Casino, and **Asheila Pluck** – Miss Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority.

In reflecting on the day's success, the young women shared their joy in knowing they were able to make a

tangible difference. "It was so inspiring to see people come forward to help," one delegate noted. "We can't wait to deliver everything to the Sunshine Home next week."

This year's Queen of Carnival Show is themed "**Celestial: Illuminate. Inspire. Reign.**", reflecting the grace, passion, and purpose that each delegate has brought to the competition and their community outreach efforts.

The highly anticipated event takes place on July 20, 2025, at 8:00 PM sharp at ARG, Carnival City.



**ANTIGUA
AND BARBUDA**
The beach is just the beginning...



ANTIGUA CARNIVAL 2025 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

PRE-EVENTS

**THURS
FEB 27**

CARNIVAL LAUNCH

**SUN
JULY 13**

**AUNTY CLAUDETTE'S
KIDDIES FETE**
CARNIVAL CITY

**THURS
JULY 17**

**CALYPSO MONARCH
SEMI-FINALS**
CARNIVAL CITY | 8PM | \$20

**FRI
JULY 18**

**PARTY MONARCH
SEMI-FINALS**
CARNIVAL CITY | 8PM | \$20

**FRI
JULY 25**

FACE OFF
CARNIVAL CITY

**SAT
JULY 26**

LIAT 2020 T-SHIRT MAS
ST. JOHN'S

**SUN
JULY 27**

GOOD MORNING D'INCLUSIVE
COOLIDGE CRICKET GROUND
JUNIOR CARNIVAL PARADE
ST. JOHN'S/CARNIVAL CITY
FREE

**MON
JULY 28**

**OASIS WATER
JUNIOR PARTY
MONARCH**
CARNIVAL CITY | 5PM | *FREE*

**TUES
JULY 29**

**KARI SOCA
INTERNATIONAL
SOCA MONARCH**
CARNIVAL CITY

**WED
JULY 30**

**BURNING FLAMES
40TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION**
CARNIVAL CITY

**THURS
JULY 31**

DRINK TILL YA WEAK
BOAT CRUISE
**LONG BAY LAGER
MELTING POT**
CARNIVAL CITY | 8PM
\$100 (GENERAL)
\$350 (HOUSE OF VIBES)
EMANCIPATION WATCH NIGHT
ARG / BOTANICAL GARDENS

**SAT
JULY 19**

WITNESS YA FITNESS
INDEPENDENCE AVENUE

**SUN
JULY 20**

**ECAB MR & MISS
TEENAGE PAGEANT**
CARNIVAL CITY | 8PM | \$20

**TUES
JULY 22**

QUEEN OF CARNIVAL
CARNIVAL CITY
\$30 (STAND) | \$50 (RESERVED)
**THE UNIVERSITY
OF WEST INDIES
FIVE ISLANDS CAMPUS
JUNIOR CALYPSO MONARCH**
CARNIVAL CITY | 5PM | *FREE*

**FRI
AUG 1**

EMANCIPATION DAY
CALYPSO MONARCH
CARNIVAL CITY | 8PM | \$30

**SAT
AUG 2**

RISE
SIR VIVIAN RICHARDS
CRICKET STADIUM
CARNIVAL DREAMZ
HODGES BAY
**STATE INSURANCE
COMPANY LTD
PANORAMA**
CARNIVAL CITY | 8PM | \$40

**SUN
AUG 3**

D BREAKFAST FETE
SPLASH ANTIGUA
INET PARTY MONARCH
CARNIVAL CITY | 8PM | \$40

**MON
AUG 4**

J'OUVERT
ST. JOHN'S
**MONDAY MAS
PARADE**
ST. JOHN'S

**TUES
AUG 5**

**PARADE
OF BANDS**
CARNIVAL CITY
LAST LAP
ST. JOHN'S



OFFICIAL CARNIVAL EVENTS

iNet Retail Store Relocates to Market Street

The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) has officially opened its new inet Retail Store, now located at the corner of Market and St. Mary's Street, formerly the Cecil's Building.

This relocation from Independence Avenue to a modern, centrally located facility reflects APUA's ongoing commitment to enhancing customer service and improving accessibility. Situated in the heart of St. John's, the new store has been designed to provide a more convenient, efficient, and comfortable customer experience.

As part of this transition, several service enhancements have been introduced at the new location. The inet Retail Store will now operate on Mondays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Customers can continue to access a full range of inet services, including new mobile and broadband sign-ups, handset purchases, and top-ups.

In addition, a dedicated APUA Quick Payment Center is now available for Electricity and Water bill payments. This cashier service will operate Mon-



days to Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with a limit of three transactions per customer.

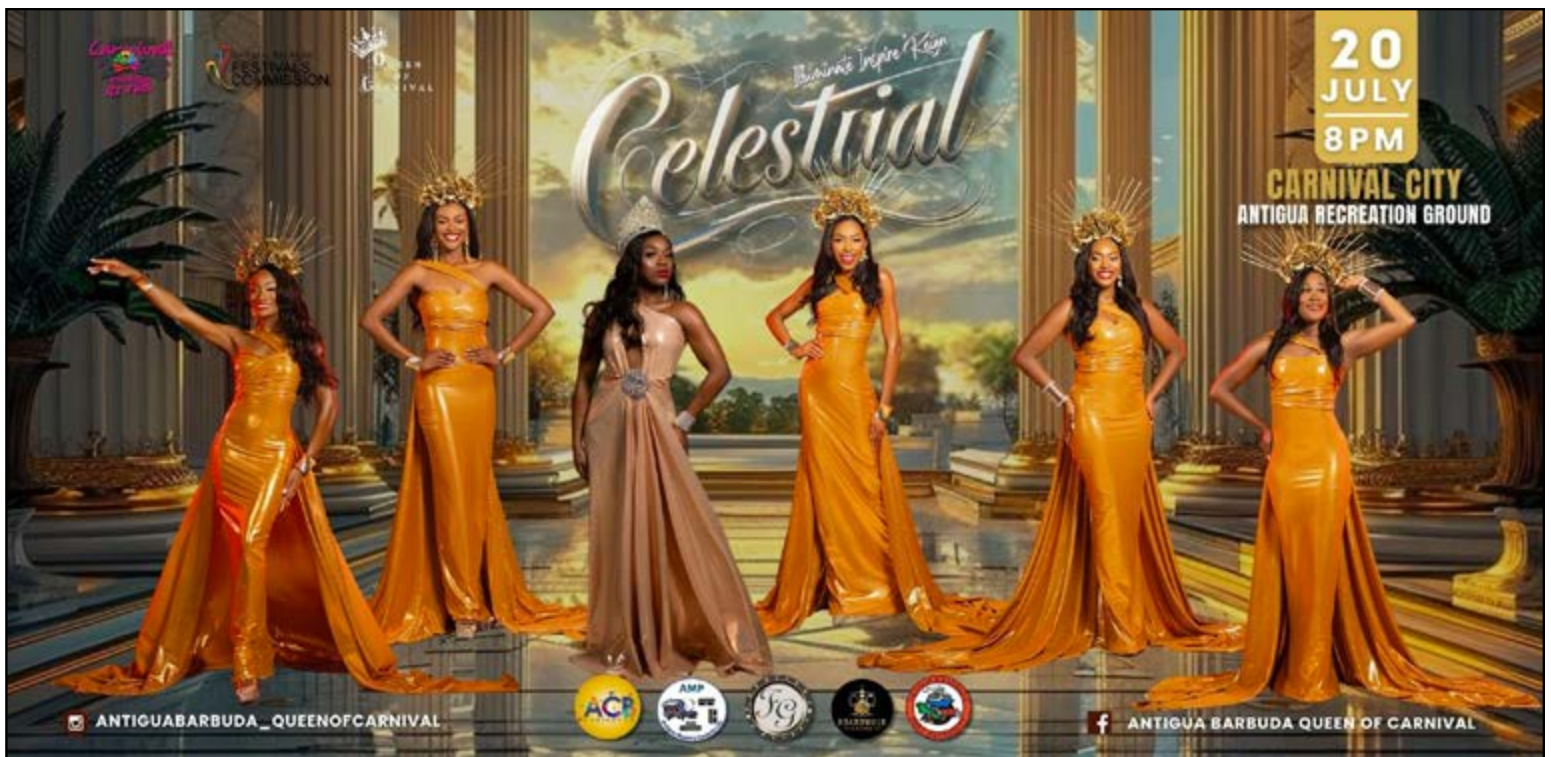
Customers will also benefit from 24-hour access to bill payments and top-ups through user-friendly self-service kiosks located onsite.

The opening of the new inet Retail Store coincides with APUA's 52nd

Anniversary and reinforces the Authority's dedication to innovation and continuous improvement.

APUA inet invites all customers to visit the new location and experience the enhanced services now available.

APUA inet thanks the public for their continued support as it continues Going Beyond Expectations





PRESS RELEASE

inet Retail Store Relocates to Market Street

St. John's, Antigua — Friday, 4th July 2025 — The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) is proud to announce the official opening of its new inet Retail Store, now located at the corner of Market and St. Mary's Street, formerly the Cecil's Building.

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Therese Mathurin Honored with Lady Williams Humanitarian Award 2025

The prestigious Lady Williams Humanitarian Award for 2025 has been awarded to Therese Mathurin at the recent Christ the King High School Annual Graduation Ceremony held last Friday.

Mathurin exemplifies vibrancy and compassion, serving as a beacon of moral support and inspiration among her peers. Throughout her high school journey, she has demonstrated stellar leadership, serving on the Student Council for three years and earning the esteemed position of Deputy Head Girl in her senior year.

A committed participant in a wide array of school activities, Therese has actively engaged in devotions, sports, charity initiatives, and community events. Her passion for fostering spiritual growth was evident as she encouraged fellow students to come together for prayer and Bible study, creating a sense of unity and purpose within her school community.

Beyond her spiritual initiatives, Therese championed charitable causes, notably promoting the Charity Excelsior campaign. Her efforts moti-



Awardee Therese Mathurin receiving the Halo plaque from Ms. Jah Kaydah Isaac, an alumna who addressed the graduating class.

vated students to donate school supplies for children in need, highlighting her heartfelt commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of others.

The Lady Williams Humanitarian Award recognizes individuals who demonstrate extraordinary compassion, leadership, and service in both of her Alma Maters — Christ

the King High School and the Antigua Girls' High School. Therese Mathurin's dedication and unwavering commitment to uplifting others embody the true spirit of this honor. She is a remarkable student whose unwavering dedication to service, faith and leadership have made a lasting impact on her community.

Governor General Sir

Rodney and Lady Williams are patrons to almost 40 charities, spanning various sectors including arts and culture, community outreach, support for the differently-abled, education, the elderly, history and heritage, the environment, health, sports, uniformed bodies, women and girls, world peace and youth.

In Defence of Common Entrance: Abolishing Exams Won't Fix Inequality



Carlton T. Knight

The results from Grade Six National Assessment are out, or in my day, simply the “Common Entrance Exams”. Anxious grade six students from across the country have now received their grades and have found out which secondary school they will be attending in the fall as ‘Universal Secondary Education’ has meant a guaranteed place for all students, regardless of performance. Despite the jubilation of many parents who are no doubt proud of the performance of their children, the regular chorus of critics who condemn the exams as an ‘anachronism’ worms its way through the celebratory air. They call, in some quarters, for these exams to be abolished, claiming they are cruel relics that entrench inequality. But let’s be clear: ***the solution to inequality is not to lower the bar or to scrap exams, but to improve opportunities for every child while maintaining high stan-***

dards. Abolishing common entrance exams would do nothing but replace transparent measurement with back-door patronage, while robbing us of critical data needed to improve our education system.

Examinations are not the enemy. They are tools—imperfect, yes, but essential. Without measurable data, policymakers fly blind, unable to target interventions where they are most needed. A 2018 UNESCO report on Caribbean education systems highlighted that robust assessment data is a key driver in closing achievement gaps. When students sit these exams, the Ministry of Education gains insight into which schools are underperforming, which communities need targeted literacy and numeracy interventions, and which students require additional support to thrive. Remove the exams, and we remove a key diagnostic tool for improving educational outcomes.

Critics argue that these exams “stress children,” but stress is not inherently harmful when coupled with support. Exams teach preparation, goal-setting, and discipline—skills children will need for CSEC, CAPE, and the modern workforce. If Singapore, one of the world’s highest-performing education systems, can continue to use the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) while producing globally competitive students, surely, we can manage exams while ensuring our children’s wellbeing.

Moreover, the notion that abolishing exams will somehow address inequality is wishful thinking at best and deeply patronising at worst. Inequality in education stems from disparities in resources, teacher

quality, and home environments—not from the existence of exams. We should be fighting for smaller class sizes, better-trained teachers, breakfast programmes, and after-school tutoring for children in Gray’s Farm, Pointe, and Old Road, not removing one of the few meritocratic gateways available to working-class students. As American education scholar Frederick Hess aptly notes, “Lowering standards in the name of equity is the bigotry of low expectations.” Are we saying that children from less affluent homes cannot succeed in exams if given the right support? As a product of the Gray’s Farm Community who placed 8th in the island in my own 2003 sitting, and as someone who attended the Antigua Grammar School with many working-class scholars from humble beginnings, I find this view personally noxious.

Indeed, abolishing exams often favours the middle and upper classes, who can navigate informal networks and gain placements for their children without public scrutiny. A 2021 report by the UK’s Education Policy Institute found that the removal of testing in certain areas disproportionately benefited wealthier families while reducing mobility for poorer students. Without exams, entry to “better” schools will depend on who you know, not what you know.

We should look to best practices globally. Singapore has consistently topped PISA rankings while maintaining rigorous testing, because testing is accompanied by aggressive interventions for underperforming students. They identify weak

Feature



areas early and deploy targeted programmes, from small group tuition to intensive language support. They don't blame the test—they use it as a compass. A 2019 OECD report underscores this: "Countries that use assessments to guide targeted interventions rather than as blunt sorting mechanisms see stronger gains in equity and outcomes."

Locally, common entrance data can inform summer bridging programmes, targeted literacy drives, and teacher training where it is most needed. Instead of scrapping exams, we should use the data to close the gap. If students in some schools consistently underperform, that is not an argument to kill the test but to fix the inequity.

Some claim that exams are "colonial relics." But the desire to measure and strive for excellence is not

colonial—it is universal. It is how we ensure that the child in a wooden house in Bolans has the same shot as the child in a gated home in Hodges Bay. Exams should not be abolished; they should be reformed where necessary to ensure fairness, support, and transparency. Perhaps there is room to include coursework or continuous assessment to complement exam results, but the principle of measurement must remain.

We are failing our children if we teach them that excellence is optional, that discomfort is always harmful, and that the solution to inequality is to eliminate standards rather than lift everyone to meet them. Let us reject the paternalistic idea that Antiguan and Barbudan children cannot handle testing, or that it is somehow kinder to hide from measurement than to confront our edu-

cational shortcomings honestly.

In the end, it is not the exams that fail our children, but our failure to support them before and after the exam. Let us work to give every child access to high-quality education, nutritious meals, and safe learning environments. Let us invest in teacher training, infrastructure, and community engagement. But let us also keep our exams—reformed, yes, but present—as a vital measure of accountability and opportunity.

Testing is not the problem; inequality is. Let's focus our energy on fixing what truly matters.

Carlton Knight has written on social, economic and political affairs and is a former AOSIS Fellow.



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2025 Grade Six National Assessment Top Students

Rank	Student Name	Sex	Primary School	Total	School Choice
1	Jasmine S. Greenaway	F	St. Nicholas Primary School	387	AGHS
2	Erin N. Frank	F	Divine Academy of Excellence	383	AGHS
3	Marciyah O. G. Henry	F	Baptist Academy of Antigua	378	AGHS
3	Liya S. Marca-Goodwin	F	Post Millennial Academy	378	SNRA
5	Evan J. M. Roberts	M	Seventh-Day Adventist Primary School	375	AGS
6	Shekira C. Jones	F	J. T. Ambrose Primary School	373	AGHS
6	Eden A. Julian	F	Baptist Academy of Antigua	373	AGHS
6	Jai-Li A. C. Bailey	F	Grace Christian Academy	373	AGHS
9	Tikara A. Browne	F	Baptist Academy of Antigua	372	AGHS
10	Mechaeil M. Jacob	M	Mary E. Pigott Primary School	371	AGS
10	Annabella K. Mansoor	F	St. Nicholas Primary School	371	AGHS
12	Kayden F. Casey	M	Baptist Academy of Antigua	370	AGS
12	Findley K. Naresh	M	Post Millennial Academy	370	AGS
14	Kiara A. James	F	Cobbs Cross Primary School	369	AGHS
14	Kylie A. N. Richards	F	St. Nicholas Primary School	369	AGHS
16	Kaylee A. L. Warner	F	St. Nicholas Primary School	368	AGHS
16	Jh'nea S. Roye	F	Divine Academy of Excellence	368	AGHS
16	Jada R. Christian	F	Post Millennial Academy	368	AGHS
19	Zakary C. Benmlih-Taya	M	St. Nicholas Primary School	367	AGS
19	Jordan M. Nathan	M	Baptist Academy of Antigua	367	AGS
21	Khai J. M. Charles	M	Cedar Grove Primary School	366	AGS
21	Leyland L. Powell	M	St. Nicholas Primary School	366	AGS
21	Aliyah A. A. Butler	F	Baptist Academy of Antigua	366	AGHS
21	Bria S. Griffith	F	Baptist Academy of Antigua	366	AGHS
25	Kelsey S. Cochrane	F	Pigotts Primary School	365	AGHS
25	Joshua E. Lee	M	St. Nicholas Primary School	365	AGS
25	Kaysi A. Isaac	F	Baptist Academy of Antigua	365	AGHS
28	Nevaeh B. Z. Joseph	F	Minoah Magnet Academy	364	AGHS
29	Kailey T. K. Henry	F	Old Road Primary School	362	AGHS
30	Tomarey L. Henry	M	Greenbay Primary School	360	AGS
30	Nivaan S. Narang	M	St. Andrews School	360	AGS

Feature

Rank	Student Name	Sex	Primary School	Total	School Choice
30	Ranesh R. Shyamala	M	St. John's Catholic Primary School	360	AGS
30	Kamilah N. N. Harrigan	F	New Bethel SDA Academy	360	AGHS
30	Kofi M. A. Thomas	M	Post Millennial Academy	360	AGS
35	Shanee' T. Francis	F	Five Islands Primary School	359	AGHS
35	Ishmael E. Vanderhyden	M	Divine Academy of Excellence	359	AGS
37	Khayleb I. M. Sylvester	M	Freetown Primary School	358	AGS
37	Jayden Christopher	M	St. Andrews School	358	AGS
37	Jenesis S. K. Samuel	F	St. Peter's Academy	358	AGHS
37	Tajah R. Roberts	F	T.O.R. Memorial School	358	AGHS
37	Analoh S. M. Williams	F	St. Nicholas Primary School	358	AGHS
37	Shiloh T. Ferris	M	Baptist Academy of Antigua	358	AGS
37	Abygail S. Daniel	F	Baptist Academy of Antigua	358	AGHS
37	Jámiah J. Blair	F	Grace Christian Academy	358	AGHS
45	Judah M. Barry	M	J. T. Ambrose Primary School	357	AGS
46	Kemmecia R. Henry	F	Baptist Academy of Antigua	356	AGHS
46	Senovia L. Morris	F	Antigua Wesleyan Junior Academy	356	AGHS
48	Reneefa A. Davis	F	Nelvie N. Gore Primary School	355	AGHS
48	Jesane F. Charles	M	Nelvie N. Gore Primary School	355	AGS
48	Elissa S. T. Rodgers	F	Seventh-Day Adventist Primary School	355	AGHS
51	Asia E. S. Smith	F	St. John's Catholic Primary School	354	AGHS
52	Tatiana F. Foster	F	Urlings Primary School	353	AGHS
52	Radiance N. Williams	F	Urlings Primary School	353	AGHS
52	Kerryenic G. L. Wright	F	Five Islands Primary School	353	SNRA
52	Natalia R. Lawrence	F	Charlesworth T. Samuel Primary School	353	AGHS
52	Agnita P. Forbes	F	Mary E. Pigott Primary School	353	AGHS
52	Kelendria J. T. Hunte	F	St. Michael's Primary School	353	AGHS
52	Ayinde Crump	M	Sunnyside Tutorial School	353	SNRA
52	Drewcilla A. Yearwood	F	T.O.R. Memorial School	353	AGHS
52	Daniel M. Harris	M	Divine Academy of Excellence	353	AGS
61	Isaiah McIntosh	M	Sunnyside Tutorial School	352	AGS
61	Isabella Wiik	F	St. Nicholas Primary School	352	AGHS
61	Amelie F. Peterson	F	St. Nicholas Primary School	352	AGHS
61	Kristoff A. W. Astaphan	M	St. Nicholas Primary School	352	AGS
61	Zolina A. Simon	F	New Bethel SDA Academy	352	AGHS
66	Marcus C. Benjamin	M	Grays Crescent Primary School	351	AGS
66	Micah A. Yearwood	M	St. Nicholas Primary School	351	AGS
68	Kai S. Lee	F	Sea View Farm Primary School	350	AGHS
68	D' Naja L. Blackstock	F	Potters Primary School	350	AGHS

Feature

Rank	Student Name	Sex	Primary School	Total	School Choice
68	Niema Z. Williams	F	St. John's Catholic Primary School	350	AGHS
68	Azariel J. Charles	M	Divine Academy of Excellence	350	AGS
72	Kennisha K. Thomas	F	New Bethel SDA Academy	349	AGHS
73	Jamare N. Denton	M	Five Islands Primary School	348	SNRA
73	Malachai C. C. Thomas	M	J. T. Ambrose Primary School	348	AGS
73	Christopher J. Walter	M	St. Nicholas Primary School	348	AGS
73	Abdul M. Sesay Jr.	M	Baptist Academy of Antigua	348	AGS
77	Ethan Jarvis	M	Sunnyside Tutorial School	347	AGS
77	Kayden T. Pearce	M	T.O.R. Memorial School	347	SNRA
77	Kaheem A. Isaac	M	Grace Christian Academy	347	AGS
77	Aiden A. A. Trellis	M	St. John's Lutheran School	347	AGS
77	Kyle J. Willette	M	St. John's Lutheran School	347	AGS
82	Shavera Y. Mannix	F	St. Andrews School	346	AGHS
82	Jahi K. Stevens	M	St. John's Catholic Primary School	346	AGS
82	Micha G. Joyce	M	Grace Christian Academy	346	AGS
82	Nickario M. R. Casimir	M	St. John's Lutheran School	346	AGS
82	Ngozichukwu J. Lechi Meregini	F	Divine Academy of Excellence	346	AGHS
87	Damani J. Thomas	M	Five Islands Primary School	345	PMS
87	Tayvon M. D. Samuel	M	Foundation Mixed School	345	AGS
87	Alyssa Watkins	F	Sunnyside Tutorial School	345	AGHS
87	Kayliah S. M. Kentish	F	Antigua Wesleyan Junior Academy	345	AGHS
87	Micaiah A. Simon	M	Grace Christian Academy	345	AGS
92	T'ara E. C. Williams	F	St. Peter's Academy	344	AGHS
92	Afia A. Little	F	Seventh-Day Adventist Primary School	344	AGHS
92	Jeshua J. Joseph	M	Seventh-Day Adventist Primary School	344	SNRA
92	Malcolm O. Otto	M	Grace Christian Academy	344	AGS
96	Nehiah M. Santana	F	Baptist Academy of Antigua	343	AGHS
96	Jannah G. A. Southwell	F	St. John's Lutheran School	343	AGHS
96	Na'zeek K. T. Martin	M	Post Millennial Academy	343	AGS
99	Chardonnay Andrew	F	St. Andrews School	342	AGHS
99	Parys A. Jeffers	F	St. Andrews School	342	AGHS
99	Kallen K. Samuels	M	St. Andrews School	342	AGS
99	Navi Parker	F	Island Academy	342	SNRA
99	Elijah J. K. Dover	M	St. John's Lutheran School	342	AGS
99	Adrian N. Taylor	M	Divine Academy of Excellence	342	AGS

Commentary



Protecting Our Children Is a Collective Responsibility



By: Terri London

In today's fast changing world, protecting our children is a collective responsibility that has become more crucial than ever before. As parents, caregivers, and members of society, it is our collective responsibility to ensure the protection and well-being of children especially during the long summer vacation.

In this regards, the importance of protecting our children should be a top priority for every community in the Caribbean.

While the protection of children involves creating a safe and secure environment free from abuse, exploitation, and neglect; children protection also includes ensuring their physical safety, emotional well-being, and protection from all forms of harm as well. The safety and well-being of children is not just a parental duty- it is also a shared responsibility. Whether at home, on the streets or within our schools and

communities, children deserve protection, care and respect.

Essentially, child protection must be comprehensive and accessible to all children, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status. Every child has the right to be treated with respect and dignity, and to receive the same level of care and protection, ensuring that their rights and well-being are prioritized and protected.

Although the Caribbean has always prided itself on strong family values and tight-knit communities, it is now time to seek out strategies, content, and activities to address and ensure the safety of young children. Child protection should now be a top priority because it's never too early to teach children about safety. Children need to understand their surroundings and know how to react.

The evidence of troubling stories of child neglect, abuse or accidents can be prevented during this long summer vacation with more awareness and collective action. When children feel safe, loved, and cared for, they are more likely to develop into healthy, well-adjusted individuals who can contribute positively to their communities. On the other hand, when children are subjected to abuse, neglect, or exploitation, the consequences can be devastating, both for the individual and for society as a whole.

On this note, the principle of shared responsibility is also crucial to effective children protection. Protect-

ing children is not the sole responsibility of any one individual or organization; it is a collective effort that requires the collaboration and engagement of parents, caregivers, educators, policymakers, and the broader community. Therefore, we must act like each child is our own, as our future depends on how well we care for the next generation. By working together, we can create a comprehensive and coordinated system of support and protection for children.

Children are the foundation of our society, and safeguarding their safety and security is not only an ethical imperative but also an asset to our collective future. By promoting a culture of child protection within organizations and communities in the Caribbean, we can create a supportive and protective environment that empowers children, families, and the broader public to play an active role in ensuring the safety and well-being of our youngest citizens. Through these collective efforts, we can work towards a future where all children can thrive and reach their full potential, free from the threat of harm.

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(Dr. Terri London D.H.C is a community activist on the Caribbean country of Antigua and Barbuda, and is actively involved services supporting educational and empowerment initiatives within Antigua and Barbuda.)

Obituary

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Statement on the Passing of Rickey Singh

By Sir Ronald Sanders

The Caribbean region and its media landscape lost an icon on July 5, 2025, with the passing of Rickey Singh.

Rickey Singh was a courageous journalist and a steadfast advocate for Caribbean integration. Through his incisive commentary, he played a role as vital as that of the region's political leaders in shaping the discourse on unity, justice, and governance. He never hesitated to hold recalcitrant leaders to account, and in doing so, he earned both admiration and fear.

His unyielding commitment to truth and justice came at a cost—he was made an exile, a refugee, and even a deportee within the Caribbean. Yet he never wavered in his principles, nor did he surrender to oppression in any form.

Though diminutive in physical stature, Rickey Singh was a giant of Caribbean journalism. Only illness could still his voice, and now, in death, that voice has been silenced. But his legacy endures. His writings will continue to resonate



across the region, reminding us of the enduring importance of human rights, freedom of expression, and the imperative of regional integration.

Personally, I have lost a dear friend—one whom I greatly admired and deeply respected. The Caribbean has lost an indomitable champion.

The photograph below, taken around

2015, shows the late Sir Shridath “Sonny” Ramphal, Rickey Singh, Hubert Williams—Rickey’s longtime friend and fellow journalist—and me.

As we mark Rickey’s passing, we also mark the gradual departure of a generation of Caribbean warriors who used the power of words to shape our collective destiny.



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The Landfill Song: A Warning We Belong

On island breeze where trade winds dance,
We cast our waste without a glance.
Forgotten cans and plastic strong,
Now join the landfill's endless song.



A song that hums of careless ways,
Of things we toss then look away.
Mountains rising, smells so wrong,
Yet still we add and play along.

The seagulls cry on heaps so high,
Where once was earth, now plastic sky.
They peck and pull at twisted strings,
A nest of wrappers, deadly things.

The song grows loud, the island feels,
The weight of all these broken deals.
For every bottle left behind,
A piece of beauty redefined.



The landfill sighs, it cannot take,
Another straw, another plate.
We fill and fill, but never mend,
A cycle cursed to have no end.

Yet still, this song, it calls to you,
To change the course, to start anew.
Refuse, reduce, then reuse strong,
Recycle right — where we belong.



Imagine hills not built of waste,
 But trees that sway with island grace.
 Imagine seas so clear and bright,
 No plastic ghosts beneath the light.



For ocean turtles, reefs of old,
 For mango groves and sands of gold.
 For children's laughter, skies so blue,
 This landfill song must end with you.



Let every can and bottle tossed,
 Remind us all what will be lost.
 Each careless act, each plastic fork,
 Another wound, another mark.



But in our hearts, the warning glows,
 A spark of hope, a seed that grows.
 That we might build, with hands so strong,
 A world where waste won't sing along.

We sort, we share, we teach, we learn,
 Compost and clean, repair, return.
 The landfill song turns soft, then fades,
 Replaced by greener serenades.

So hear this call, both young and old,
 The story's yours, the future told.
 Together brave, together strong,
 We end the landfill's haunting song.

In island winds, a promise born,
 To heal the earth we both adorn.
 A warning deep — yet hope prolongs,
 For here, this is **where we belong.**



Regional News

Vybz Kartel, Spice, Steel Pulse, Kes among big acts for the WCMF, Kassav returns for the silver jubilee

Dancehall sensation, Vybz Kartel and Spice are among the acts on Dominica's World Creole Music Festival's star-studded lineup for 2025.

Dubbed 25 in 2025 organisers have put together a large collection of local, regional and international acts curated to appeal to both traditional Festival goers and those who will experience this dynamic event for the first time.

This year's theme, 'Global Echoes of the Nature Isle: Celebrating 25 years of Creole Music, Magic and Memories' sets the stage for magical memories with the likes of Kassav, Ophelia Marie, Gordon Henderson, Midnight Groovers, Elisha Benoit, Michele Henderson and Asa Banton staple acts of the unique event created in 1997 to showcase creole music and culture.

With the official launch of the festival on Friday, Tourism Minister, Denise Charles Pemberton gloated with pride about the festival's growth over the last two decades.

"25 years of rhythm, culture, colour, pride, and passion. 25 years of a cultural product that has redefined the entertainment in Dominica and placed our nature island at the pinnacle of festival tourism in the region. This is the silver jubilee of the World Creole Music Festival and tonight, I stand before you filled with gratitude, honour, and full of excitement because we are growing bigger, bolder, and better than ever before," she said.

The WCMF was envisioned to express Dominica's unique creole identity through music and to showcase the talent of local artists to a world class audience, Pemberton



reminisced.

"We lit a spark and today, that spark is a blazing fire that burns bright across the Caribbean in the diaspora and the world. Tonight, we honour the pioneers and visionaries who gave life to the festival, the artists, the planners, the government, the sponsors, and most of all, the people of Dominica who made this stage the heartbeat of the world. We celebrate our icons, the pioneers of Cadence, who served as inspiration, Madame Ophelia, Gordon Henderson, Exile One, Midnight Groovers, and the bands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Haiti and Africa who partnered with us from the very start."

In 2024 alone Dominica welcomed

11,000 visitors for the festival; Pemberton is looking forward to even greater numbers this year.

Additional big acts for the event include Burning Flames, Nu Look, Oswald, Romain Virgo, Steel Pulse, Jixels, Joe Dwet File, Kes the Band, Ridge, Bunji Garlin and Fay Ann Lyons, Ezra D Fun Machine, Kassav Trilla G, Triple K, Signal Band, Tiwa Savage and many more. A full lineup can be found on the festivals page, Dominica Festivals.

Organisers said there are still at least three more major acts to be revealed.

The WCMF will take place from October 24 to 26, 2025 at the Windsor Park Sports Stadium in Roseau. *(Loop Caribbean)*

Jamaican designer Mikayla Salmon makes global splash with Shein collection

Clarendon-born fashion designer Mikayla Salmon began nurturing her passion in high school, driven by a dream of one day collaborating with top international brands.

That dream took an unexpected leap forward last November when global fast-fashion giant Shein reached out to her, resulting in the birth of her debut four-piece spring collection, including a best-seller.

However, when the fast-rising fashion giant contacted Salmon, she was stunned, thinking it was a scam.

“At first I was like, Shein texted my phone? That must be a scam,” she admitted with a laugh, still amazed. “So I left the message ‘on read’ for about two hours, and I literally heard a voice say, ‘Respond to the message.’”

And when she did, the company immediately sent her a contract.

Her debut Shein collection, launched this past April, fuses her creative energy with current fashion trends.

The four-piece line includes a cute pink romper, a denim bubble mini dress, and a sunset ombré cut-out bodycon dress, which have collectively sold more than 500 pieces.

Her best-seller, a two-piece orange skirt set, has sold out twice and was a best-seller when the line opened. Customers, in another month, can expect the design in another colour, which for now, is being kept secret.

To the best of Salmon’s knowledge, she is the second Jamaica-born designer to be featured in a major Shein collaboration – a distinction that fills her with pride.

The designer explained that she was given about five months to design the collection and that initially she had sent 14 designs, but only four were accepted.



“They did all the technical stuff, like cut, sew, fulfil the orders, branding, promotion, marketing – everything was left with them. The only thing that I had to do was design and send them the original sketches,” she shared.

The 29-year-old part-time pharmacy technician, who won the Campari Pop Style competition in 2018 and showcased her designs in Cuba last year, is still reeling from this great achievement but knows the value of showing up and putting herself out there.

Asked how she was selected, Salmon said she had unsuccessfully entered two competitions offered by Shein and she had applied three times to be a part of the Shein X designer programme.

She surmised that she was selected based on the fact that her credentials would have been in the fashion giant’s database.

According to Salmon, her only challenge was self-doubt.

“Everything that I drew at first, I kind

of liked it, but I was second-guessing myself, wondering if persons will take to my designs, and what I want to showcase to them, how they would receive them, and if I would get the support from my Jamaican audience,” she said.

Salmon started working at 15 while attending Denbigh High in May Pen. After graduation, she honed her technical skills at Garmex HEART Academy, obtaining certification in garment construction and fashion design.

She later launched Young Addiction, her home-based business that caters to unique body types, especially plus-size women.

“It was always important for me to make people feel beautiful, especially women like me who struggle to find stylish clothes that fit well,” she explained.

When it comes to inspiration, Jamaica’s golden age of style in the 1990s – a time marked by bold colours, daring silhouettes, and vibrant self-expression – influences her creative juices.

Salmon said she is drawn to the boldness in fashion trends and individuality of that era.

“I realised that a lot of persons had their individual style and persons overseas looked to Jamaica for fashion influences and styles,” she said.

Still, she admits that the collaboration hasn’t fully registered with many Jamaicans, though her news about being selected for the collection was met with overwhelming support.

“Even though I posted it on TikTok, there are still a lot of people who are not aware that I, a Jamaican, am behind this line.

“But when I posted the video online, I was not expecting the response that I got. It was so overwhelming at first.

Regional News



A lot of persons who didn't even know me were reaching out and saying they're proud of me and it's a good look. So yeah, I got a lot of positive response and I think this is a great and positive push towards fashion in Jamaica worldwide," she said.

So far, Salmon said the reception from her family and friends has also been enormous, but that her community is still in the dark. However, she is anticipating an equally staggering outpouring of love and support once they become aware.

Despite this achievement – her biggest yet – Salmon remains deeply rooted. She continues to sew for clients heading to events like Chillin' on the Farm and Teacup Sundays. She also designs custom bridal wear, swimwear, and pageant gowns.

So far, Salmon said she has not worked with local celebrities, but that all her customers are celebrities. She is hoping to one day style well-known entertainers such as Spice, Masicka, and Vybz Kartel.

"I live, eat, and breathe fashion," Salmon said. "There's nothing else I'd rather do."

But she isn't blind to the challenges local designers face.

"It's hard to access quality fabrics in Jamaica. We all end up using the same thing, which stifles creativity," she told *The Sunday Gleaner*. "And shipping costs for international customers are too high. That needs to change."

Salmon believes reviving and investing in former industrial zones like the Garmex Free Zone could transform the local fashion economy. "We used to export. We can do it again. Designers like me are doing the design, the sewing, the branding – everything. What we need now is infrastructure to do manufacturing."

When asked what is next for Young Addiction, Salmon indicated that a men's line is on the horizon.

"I want to create versatile men's clothing – things you can wear to church, brunch, a party," she teased. "Something that Jamaican men will actually feel good in."

She's also developing a custom ackee print – a nod to national identity – which will be an entry in the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission's Fashion and Visual Arts competition.

For aspiring designers, Salmon offers heartfelt advice:

"Be yourself and stay true to your vision, even if it's not what's trending," she urges. "Use social media consistently to showcase your work. And don't be afraid to enter competitions. Mind you, if I wasn't posting, none of this would have been possible."

While Salmon envisions more global collaborations and multiple best-sellers, her ultimate goal is to make per-

sons like herself – "the fat country girl" – feel comfortable and confident in whatever they wear, how they present themselves to the world, and how they want to be perceived."

Although proud to build her career at home, Salmon also dreams of one day working in Lagos, Nigeria – a city known for its booming fashion industry.

"If I weren't doing this in Jamaica, I'd want to be in Lagos," she smiled. "The fashion industry there is booming. The fabrics, the culture, the creativity – it's like a dream."

But for now, Mikayla Salmon believes she is right where she's meant to be – proving that even a "fat country girl from Clarendon" can become a global designer with a voice as bold and bright as her best-selling dress. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)



Veteran Caribbean journalist Rickey Singh dies

The veteran and respected Caribbean journalist, Rickey Ramotar Singh, died in Barbados on Saturday. He was 88 years old.

The Guyanese-born Singh, who received an honorary doctorate from the University of the West Indies (UWI) and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Guyana government in 2023, had been ailing for a long time.

The founding president of the now defunct Caribbean Association of Media Workers (CAMWORK), Singh published his first story in 1957 at the Guiana Graphic and swiftly moved from covering general stories and beats to political reporting covering various issues in Guyana and across the Caribbean.

Singh, the third of four children, left school at the age of 17 and while at the Guiana Graphic he was sent for training in journalism at the University of Indiana.

In 1974 he was sent to England as a protective measure by Lord Thompson of the Thompson Fleet, which also owned the Guiana Graphic. But he refused to stay saying that he would never raise his children in a society that made them feel less than



who they are.

Singh identified strongly as Caribbean person and returned from London within a few months.

In Guyana, he dared and challenged Forbes Burnham, the country's first executive president, with Singh later moving to Trinidad and Tobago with his family to work as editor of "Caribbean Contact", the official newspaper of the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC).

But his stay in Trinidad and Tobago also brought him into confrontation with the People's National Movement (PNM) government that did not tolerate his delving into matters

they did not wish ventilated and withdrew his work permit, which had been issued on application by the church organisation.

Singh moved to Barbados with his wife, Patricia "Dolly" Singh and their six children, and he "crossed swords" with then prime minister John "Tom" Adams over the United States invasion of Grenada in 1983 to topple the left wing government of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.

The Barbados administration withdrew Singh's work permit but generously ignored the fact that his wife and children remained resident on the island. His strategy then

was to visit Barbados as a tourist on numerous occasions so as to keep the family together.

"His moderate radicalism and expansive knowledge and warm personality attracted into his circle of friends and adherents bright and ambitious youngsters who were to flower into leadership positions in the Caribbean. They supped at the table of Rickey Singh's enthusiasm, knowledge and political savvy, and some later ascended to prominence," wrote his long time Guyanese friend, Hubert Williams, a former editor in chief at the Barbados-based Caribbean News Agency (CANA), now the Caribbean Media

Regional News



Corporation (CMC).

Singh maintained close relationships with writers and artists, among them the Guyanese writer and poet, Martin Carter, the late Barbadian writer, George Lamming, Wilson Harris, the late Nobel Prize winners for Literature, Derek Walcott of St. Lucia and Vidya Naipaul of Trinidad and Tobago.

He was a close friend of the late Owen Baptiste and his wife, Rhona and it was Baptiste who was also responsible for him becoming a contributing writer for a number of regional newspapers, including the the Trinidad Express, the Trinidad Guardian, the Guyana Chronicle, the Jamaica Gleaner, the Barbados Nation as well with CANA/CMC as a political commentator on regional issues.

Singh also contributed to now defunct BBC Caribbean Report as well as media outlets in North America and Britain.

He also struck up a good relationship with various Caribbean leaders and thinkers, including the late Sir Shridath Ramphal, the former Commonwealth secretary general and a former Guyana attorney general, St Vincent and the Grenadines Prime Minister, Dr Ralph Gonsalves, the former St. Lucia prime minister Dr Kenny Anthony, as well as the senior government minister in Guyana, Gail Teixeira

His father died when he was two months old and his mother remarried and had a son, who died as an infant and a daughter, Madhonah.

His mother died when he was eight or nine years old. She herself was still quite young and he remembered to run through the village shouting out her death so that the villagers would know.

Williams wrote that during his long career, Singh “has been buttressed by his faith, stoically endured much, but there have been occasions when he cried like a child—for family matters close to his heart, one of those being the death of his beloved wife on April 8, 2015. He was also very devastated when his great friend Dr Walter Rodney was murdered in Georgetown on June 13, 1980.

“But he continues to say he is blessed, prays at every meal, knows the myriad times that he barely escaped from tragedy, ex-

ults in the love of his children, the very many good friends he still has; and even ...as he battles declining health, finds resuscitation in his church, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, it is more than likely that he will find the energy to produce a masterpiece on the life and times of “Ramoustar” Rickey Singh, the celebrated Guyanese journalist of the 20th Century ... All he needs to do is search his files and reproduce”.

In a brief statement, the Guyana Press Association(GPA) extended condolences to the family, friends and regional media colleagues of Singh.

The funeral service for Singh will be announced later. (*Loop Caribbean*)

Five dead in Trelawny highway crash

Five people have been confirmed dead “so far” in an early-morning motor vehicle crash in Trelawny on Sunday, a police report has revealed.

The names of the victims were not released.

The crash occurred along the North Coast Highway and involved a Toyota bus.

“Horrific! One of the worse multiple fatality crashes in recent times,” said Dr Lucien Jones, vice chairman of the National Road Safety



Council.

The police report listed ex-

cessive speeding, inattention/diverted attention and failure “to keep to the near side/proper traffic lane” as possible causes of the crash.

A total of 194 people have died in 170 fatal crashes in Jamaica since January 1, this year, according to the latest police data.

Deaths are down four per cent while fatal crashes are down three per cent when compared with the corresponding period last year. (*Jamaica Gleaner*)

Elon Musk says he is launching new political party

Elon Musk says he is launching a new political party, weeks after dramatically falling out with US President Donald Trump.

The billionaire announced on his social media platform X that he had set up the America Party, billing it as a challenge to the Republican and Democratic two-party system.

“When it comes to bankrupting our country with waste & graft, we live in a one-party system, not a democracy.

“Today, the America Party is formed to give you back your freedom.”

As of Saturday, the Federal Electoral Commission had not published documents indicating the party had

cial backer: Musk spent \$250m (£187m) to help him regain office.

After the election, he was appointed to lead the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (Doge), which was tasked with identifying swingeing cuts in the federal budget.

His fallout with Trump began when he left the administration in May and publicly criticised Trump’s tax and spending plans.

The legislation - which Trump has called his “big, beautiful bill” - was narrowly passed by Congress and signed into law by the president this week.

The massive law includes huge spending commitments and tax cuts, and is estimated to add more than \$3tn to the US deficit over the next decade.

Crucially for Musk, who owns electric-vehicle giant Tesla, Trump’s bill does not focus on green transition or subsidies for products like Teslas.

“Elon may get more subsidy than any human being in history, by far,” Trump wrote on his social media site, Truth Social, this week. “Without subsidies, Elon would probably have to close up shop and head back home to South Africa.”

Trump threatened to have Doge look into subsidies in favour of Musk’s companies, alluding also to the billionaire’s other businesses.

Musk also owns SpaceX, which launches rockets for the US government, and Starlink, which provides satellite service for US and European defence forces. (*BBC News*)



However, it is unclear if the party has been formally registered with US election authorities. Musk, who was born outside of the US and is thus ineligible to run for the US presidency, does not say who will lead it.

He first raised the prospect of forming a party during his public feud with Trump, which saw him leave his role in the administration and engage in a vicious public spat with his former ally.

During that row, Musk posted a poll on X asking users if there should be a new political party in the US.

Referencing that poll in his post on Saturday, Musk wrote: “By a factor of 2 to 1, you want a new political party and you shall have it!

been formally registered.

While there have been high-profile players outside the traditional two-party system in US politics, it is difficult for them to gain strong enough nationwide popularity to pose a real threat.

In the presidential election last year, candidates from the likes of Libertarian Party, the Green Party and the People’s Party all tried in vain to stop Trump or his Democratic rival, Kamala Harris, from winning.

Musk was until recently a core supporter of Trump, dancing alongside him during election rallies last year and bringing his four-year-old son to meet Trump in the Oval Office.

He was also Trump’s key finan-

Uganda's 80-year-old president in bid to extend 40-year rule



Uganda's long-serving president, Yoweri Museveni, 80, has been declared the governing party's candidate in next year's presidential election, opening the way for him to seek to extend his nearly 40 years in power.

In his acceptance speech, Museveni said that he had responded to the call and, if elected, would press ahead with his mission to turn Uganda into a "high middle income country".

Museveni's critics say he has ruled with an iron hand since he seized power as a rebel leader in 1986.

He has won every election held since then, and the constitution has been amended twice to remove age and term limits to allow him remain in office.

Pop star-turned-politician Bobi Wine is expected to be Museveni's main challenger in the election scheduled for next January.

Wine told the BBC in April that he would run against Museveni if he was nominated by his party, the National Unity Platform, but it was getting "tougher" to be in opposition because of growing state repression.

"Being in the opposition in Uganda means being labelled a terrorist," he said.

Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, lost the last election in 2021 to Museveni by 35% to 59% in a

poll marred by allegations of rigging and a crackdown on the opposition.

Another prominent opposition politician, Kizza Besigye, has been in detention since November after being accused of treason. He denies the allegation, saying his arrest is political.

In his acceptance speech at the National Resistance Movement (NRM) conference on Saturday, Museveni said that he had brought about stability and progress in Uganda.

He said it was crucial that Uganda did not "miss the bus of history as happened in the past when Europe transformed and Africa stagnated and was enslaved".

Museveni added that he wanted Uganda to take a "qualitative leap", and become a "high upper middle income country".

"Other countries in Asia with less natural resources, did it. We can do it," he added. (BBC News)

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Archaeologists unveil 3,500-year-old city in Peru

Archaeologists have announced the discovery of an ancient city in Peru's northern Barranca province.

The 3,500-year-old city, named Peñico, is believed to have served as a key trading hub connecting early Pacific coast communities with those living in the Andes mountains and Amazon basin.

Located some 200km north of Lima, the site lies about 600 metres (1,970 feet) above sea level and is thought to have been founded between 1,800 and 1,500 BC - around the same time that early civilisations were flourishing in the Middle East and Asia.

Researchers say the discovery sheds light on what became of the Americas' oldest civilisation, the Caral.

Drone footage released by researchers shows a circular structure on a hillside terrace at the city's centre, surrounded by the remains of stone and mud buildings.

Eight years of research at the site unearthed 18 structures, including ceremonial temples and residential complexes.

In buildings at the site, researchers discovered ceremonial objects, clay sculptures of human and animal figures and necklaces made from beads and seashells.



Peñico is situated close to where Caral, recognised as the oldest known civilisation in the Americas, was established 5,000 years ago at around 3,000 BC in the Supe valley of Peru.

Caral features 32 monuments, including large pyramid structures, sophisticated irrigation agriculture and urban settlements. It is believed to have developed in isolation to other comparative early civilisations in India, Egypt, Sumeria and China.

Dr Ruth Shady, the archaeologist who led the recent research into Peñico and the excavation of Caral in the 1990s, said that the discovery was important for understanding what became of the Caral civilisation after it was decimated by climate change.

The Peñico community was "situated in a strategic location for trade, for exchange with societies from the coast, the highlands and the jungle", Dr Shady told the Reuters news agency.

At a news conference unveiling the findings on Thursday, archaeologist Marco Machacuay, a researcher with the Ministry of Culture, said that Peñico's significance lies in it being a continuation of the Caral society.

Peru is home to many of the Americas' most significant archaeological discoveries, including the Inca citadel of Machu Picchu in the Andes and the mysterious Nazca Lines etched into the desert along the central coast. *(BBC News)*

Alleged mastermind behind shooting of Colombian senator and presidential candidate arrested

The alleged mastermind behind the shooting of a conservative Colombian senator and presidential candidate was taken into custody Saturday, almost a month after the attack, law enforcement authorities said.

Elder José Arteaga Hernández, alias 'Chipi' or 'Costeño', was arrested in a neighbourhood in the north-

western part of the capital, Bogotá, National Police Director Maj. Gen. Carlos Fernando Triana told reporters.

Authorities had previously accused him and other suspects of being near the Bogotá park where Miguel Uribe Turbay was shot in broad daylight on June 7.

Uribe was giving a political

speech in the park when he was attacked from behind and wounded in the head, allegedly by a minor who was captured as he fled.

Three other people have been arrested for participating in the logistics and execution of the crime.

The motive is still being investigated.

Uribe, who in October announced his intention to run in the 2026 presidential election, remains in intensive care and has undergone several surgeries. From his Senate seat, he had become one of President Gustavo Petro's most vocal critics. *(Jamaica Gleaner)*

Sports News

Blackhawks may utilize the court to resolve dispute with ABCA

The PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks might utilize the court to seek redress after being barred from contesting the final of the Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Super40 Cup on Sunday.

President of the Liberta Sports Club, former West Indies player Kenneth "Flipper" Benjamin, said the organization is adhering to the advice of its legal representatives and will not make any public comment on the matter.

Benjamin said the club has taken this stance after the players of the Liberta Blackhawks were removed by police officers from the New Winthorpes playing field, where they had shown up to contest Sunday's Super40 Cup final against the New Winthorpes Lions.

Sunday's incident in New Winthorpes unfolded after President of the ABCA Leon "Kuma" Rodney informed the Liberta Sports Club, via a WhatsApp message on Saturday evening, that the Blackhawks have been thrown out of the competition for breaching the competition's rules.

The message from Rodney states, "I write to you as president of the ABCA to inform you that we have found the PIC Liberta in breach of the ABCA 18.7. The final of the ABCA S40 will be played between the New Winthorpes Lions and the Empire Nation."

The Liberta Sports Club responded to Rodney via a letter signed by Benjamin. In its response, the Liberta Sports Club stated, "We got no explanation from you of who the player or players were. The eleven players who played yesterday (Saturday) for PIC Blackhawks are currently living in Antigua and Barbuda. You being a LICB and CWI Director must be aware of this.

"As such, your position or that of the ABCA is illegal, improper, unconstitutional, and potentially discriminatory. We therefore demand that your communication and/or position be immediately withdrawn and retracted. It is



Leon 'Kuma' Rodney

our intention to show up today for our 11 am game at New Winthorpes.

"We also request an urgent meeting with the ABCA to resolve this matter. It is our intention to be present with a legal representative."

At the heart of this dispute is the lack of a clear policy as to who is considered a local or overseas player in relation to their status or eligibility to represent any club in the ABCA's domestic competitions.

Several clubs have used players from other Leeward Islands territories in the ABCA's competition. Liberta Blackhawks have utilized the services of Jamaican fast bowler Oshane Thomas in the ABCA competitions this season.

However, it is widely known that Thomas, although Jamaican, has been residing in Antigua. So too is Barbadian opening batsman Rivaldo Clarke, who has been residing in Antigua and Barbuda since 2024 as a member of the West Indies Academy, which is based at Coolidge in Antigua.

By utilizing the services of Clarke in their commanding 10-wicket win against Empire Nation in Saturday's Super40 Cup semi-finals, the Liberta Blackhawks are being accused of breaching the ABCA's competition law 18.7, which states, "Overseas players must play at least four preliminary matches to be eligible to play the



Kenneth Benjamin

semi-finals and finals."

Clarke has been registered as a Liberta Blackhawks player since March 2025. However, although he currently resides in Antigua and Barbuda, he was not available for selection with the Blackhawks due to his involvement with the West Indies Academy for the recently concluded series against the visiting Sri Lanka Emerging Players.

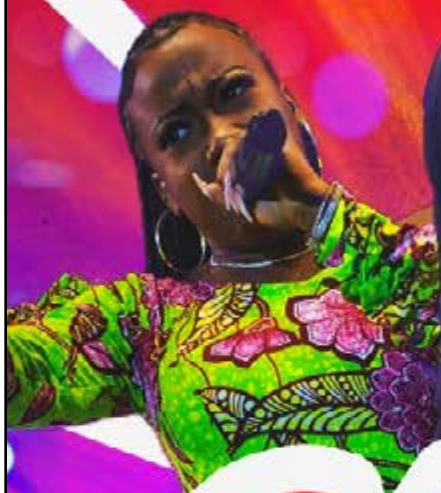
Liberta is contending that Barbadian Rivaldo Clarke is not an overseas player since he is currently residing in Antigua and Barbuda, while the ABCA is claiming the contrary.

The court might be called upon to make a ruling or give an opinion to bring an amicable solution to this matter.

One thing is clear: having some of the best young cricketers residing in Antigua as part of the Cricket West Indies setup and being able to play in the nation's domestic cricket league should be embraced by all cricket lovers, none more so than the ABCA, which has a mandate for the overall development of the sport in the twin-island state.



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Sports News



Young Warriors and Tropic Ace partnership gives incentives for Antigua Cup



Tropic Ace's Managing Director Brent Emmanuel, right, and Colin James, President of Young Warriors, sealed the deal on the partnership between both parties for the Antigua Cup tournament.

Clubs and teams participating in the second annual Antigua Cup International Youth Football Tournament will benefit from a generous partnership agreement between the organisers, Young Warriors Football Club (YWFC), and Tropic Ace, an Antiguan clothing and sportswear company, which is located at Redcliffe Quay in St. John's.

The Antigua Cup, featuring four age categories: under-10, under-13, under-15, and under-17, kicked off at the Buckley's Primary School playing field on Sunday and runs until July 13.

More than 200 boys and girls are expected to benefit from this initiative. At a recent media conference, Tropic Ace's Managing Director, Brent Emmanuel, said his company was committed to assisting the tour-

nament and delighted to be investing in the future talent of Antigua and Barbuda and the Caribbean.

Emmanuel also highlighted the areas of benefit for the teams and clubs. He said there will be a discount for all participants.

"As part of our commitment to supporting the football community, we will offer 10 per cent at Tropic Ace to all tournament participants for the month of July.

"This offer will allow the players and their families to enjoy high-quality products at a discounted price, and it aligns with our goal of fostering community engagement," Emmanuel said.

"We recognize that each age group deserves to be celebrated for their effort and dedication. Prizes will be awarded to players in each of the 4 age groups.



Two Young Warriors players' show-off what's in store for the Antigua Cup participants. (Photos the courtesy of Bianca Francis of Tropic Ace)

"There will be an EC\$200 gift certificate for the MVP from each age group to reward exceptional performance on the field; a \$200 gift certificate for the best girl in each age group, recognizing the outstanding contributions of female athletes in the tournament; and a \$200 gift certificate for the top defender in each age group, honouring the crucial defensive skills that help shape the game.

"To further celebrate the achievements of the winning teams in each age group, Tropic Ace will provide five soccer balls for each of the four age group winners, totalling 20 soccer balls. This

prize will help further develop the teams' skills and encourage continued participation in football."

President of YWFC, Colin James, expressed his club's gratitude on behalf of the competing clubs and teams to Tropic Ace and described the company's assistance as timely and beneficial.

The Antigua Cup International Youth Football Tournament and Player Development Camp were conceptualized by the Young Warriors Football Club to attract international, regional and Antiguan clubs to develop and expose talented players for possible academy and professional tryouts.

Darg A Bark drop points in All Saints Community Football League

Darg A Bark dropped points for the first time in the All Saints Community Football League in their latest outing.

After winning their first three matches, Darg A Bark were held to a goalless draw by Attackers in their Zone A encounter at the Mack Pond playing field in All Saints.

The result allows Darg A Bark to remain at the top of Zone A in the six-team round-robin group play. Darg A Bark advanced to 13 points from their

quota of five Group A matches.

Attackers finished their quota of Group A matches in fourth place with five points after securing their only draw in five encounters.

Fundamentals moved to the top of Zone B after recording their third win in four matches with a 3-1 victory against Yorkshire in their latest outing.

Zaga, Troy Jules, and Shackwon Simon each scored once to propel Fundamentals to their latest victory.

The result allows Fundamental to leapfrog Police to the top of Zone B with nine points. Yorkshire remains in fourth place with four points after suffering their second loss in four matches.

The top four teams in each zone at the end of the round-robin preliminary group phase will advance to the knockout and quarter-final stage of the 12-team competition.

Australia crush West Indies to secure series victory

Australia surged to a commanding 133-run win over the West Indies on Sunday at the National Cricket Stadium in Grenada, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match Test series.

The West Indies were bundled out for 143 in their second innings, unable to withstand the relentless pressure of the Australian bowling attack on the penultimate day of the second Test.

Resuming on 221 for seven, Alex Carey and Pat Cummins were tasked with extending Australia's overnight lead.

Carey, who started the day on 26, added just four more runs before falling for 30 to Shamar Joseph, trapped lbw in the 69th over after a successful West Indies review.

Cummins, on for overnight, managed only eight deliveries before he was caught behind off Joseph for the same score.

Mitchell Starc struck a brisk 13 not out from 22 balls, including one boundary, while Josh Hazlewood added four before Alzarri



The Australians celebrate the dismissal of West Indies opening batsman Kraigg Brathwaite on the fourth day of the second Test at the National Cricket Stadium in St. George's, Grenada, on Sunday, July 6, 2025. (Getty Images)

Joseph knocked him over to wrap up the innings at 243 in 71.3 overs.

Shamar Joseph finished with four for 66 to lead the West Indies attack, Alzarri Joseph claimed two for 52, and Justin Greaves picked up two for 22. Set 277 to win, the West Indies' response was feeble.

Josh Hazlewood struck in just the second over, trapping John Campbell lbw

for a duck — a decision upheld after a failed review. Keacy Carty (10), Kraigg Brathwaite (7), and Brandon King (14) fell cheaply, leaving the hosts reeling at 33 for four by lunch.

Captain Roston Chase offered the only real resistance with a counterattacking 34 off 41 balls, including two sixes. But he fell lbw to Starc after a review confirmed the on-field deci-

sion, and with his dismissal at 86 for six, the innings unraveled rapidly.

Shai Hope added 17 before falling to a return catch by Hazlewood, while Justin Greaves (2) and Alzarri Joseph (13 off 4 balls) departed in quick succession.

Shamar Joseph smashed three sixes in an entertaining 24 from 23 balls, but his dismissal, followed by Jayden Seales (8), ended the innings at 143 in just 34.3 overs.

Nathan Lyon cleaned up the tail with three for 42, Starc grabbed three for 24, and Hazlewood took two for 33 as Australia's bowling unit once again delivered a ruthless performance.

With the win, Australia secured the series and moved further ahead in the ICC World Test Championship standings.

The final Test begins at Sabina Park in Kingston on July 12, where the West Indies will be hoping to restore some pride and avoid a series whitewash.

Sports News



West Indies slip out of 2027 World Cup qualification zone



Players of the West Indies ODI team in England in June 2025.

The West Indies have suffered a significant setback on the international stage, falling out of the automatic qualification zone for the 2027 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in the latest One-Day International (ODI) team rankings released this week.

Following Bangladesh's spirited six-run win over Sri Lanka in the second ODI in Colombo—highlighted by a match-winning spell of five for 39 from Taijul Islam—the Tigers have climbed to ninth in the ICC ODI rankings, leapfrogging the West Indies, who now sit in 10th with a rating of 77.

This shift has serious implications for the Caribbean side. Only the top eight teams, excluding hosts South Africa and Zimbabwe, are guaranteed direct entry to the 2027 ODI World Cup.

With the West Indies now outside

that threshold, their path to qualification has become uncertain, raising the grim possibility of returning to the qualifying tournament—a route that cost them a World Cup berth in 2023.

In that 2023 campaign, the Men in Maroon were eliminated in the qualifiers by Sri Lanka and the Netherlands, missing the World Cup for the first time in history.

A repeat would further underscore the team's ongoing struggles in the 50-over format and compound pressure on the Cricket West Indies administration to arrest the slide.

The latest rankings reflect an increasingly competitive mid-tier. While India remain atop the table with a rating of 124, and Australia and New Zealand are tied at 109 points in second and third, the lower half of the top ten continues to shift dramatically

with each series.

Sri Lanka, despite their loss to Bangladesh, sit fifth with a 102 rating, while Pakistan (104) moved up to fourth. South Africa (96), Afghanistan (91), and England (88) round out the current top eight.

Bangladesh's rise to ninth came at the perfect time, with their final ODI against Sri Lanka still to come. Meanwhile, West Indies—whose rating dropped to 77 despite playing the same number of matches (32) as Bangladesh—must now regroup with urgency if they hope to climb back into the top eight before the qualification cutoff date of March 31, 2027.

While South Africa and Zimbabwe have already secured their spots as co-hosts of the 2027 edition, Namibia, the third co-host, must still qualify through regular channels as they are not an ICC Full Member.

With a 14-team format for the next ODI World Cup, four remaining spots will be determined via a 10-team qualifier tournament. If the West Indies fail to improve their ranking in time, they will once again find themselves in the high-risk battle for those final places—a path no former world champion wants to tread.

The road ahead is now clearer—and tougher—for the two-time world champions. Their fate lies in consistent performances in the next two years, or risk becoming a cautionary tale of cricket's changing landscape.



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The Antigua Public Utilities Authority (APUA) is seeking a motivated and creative Public Relations Coordinator to support and manage key public relations and public education initiatives. This role is essential to strengthening APUA's brand presence and fostering meaningful connections with the public, media, and key stakeholders.

Key duties include:

- Develop and execute strategic public relations campaigns that align with APUA's goals
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- Monitor media coverage and assess the impact of PR initiatives
- Craft and refine compelling content across formats, including articles, reports, and promotional materials
- Oversee the production of brochures, leaflets, videos, photography, and other multimedia assets
- Plan and coordinate events such as press conferences, exhibitions, and community outreach activities
- Manage APUA's website updates and support digital engagement efforts
- Conduct research to guide public relations and education strategies
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- Bachelor's degree in Communications, Marketing or a related field.
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OR Email: hr@apua.ag

Deadline for application is Wednesday 16th July, 2025

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Lions wins first ABCA's Super40 Cup



The New Winthorpes Lions team, the new ABCA Super40 Cup Champions.



Players of the New Winthorpes Lions celebrate after winning the ABCA Super40 Cup at the New Winthorpes playing field on Sunday, July 6, 2025. (Photos by Elwin Francis)

CMW New Winthorpes Lions won their maiden Antigua and Barbuda Cricket Association's (ABCA) Super40 Cup on Sunday.

The New Winthorpes Lions claimed the coveted domestic one-day trophy with a commanding eight-wicket win against Empire Nation in the final at the New Winthorpes playing field.

Empire Nation was bundled out for 72 in 18 overs after winning the toss and electing to bat. Opener Zianni Da Silva, who was the only Empire Nation batsman to reach double figures, hit a top score of 19 of 27 balls.

Orandel Boston snapped up four wickets for nine runs, and Demari Benta picked up two wickets for four runs.

The New Winthorpes Lions achieved victory by scoring 73 for two in 15.3 overs. Opener Jermaine Ottos hit an unbeaten 35 off 50 balls, and Bartlette Henry struck 27 not out off 30 balls.

Captain Justin Athanaze captured two for 24 for Empire Nation. Sunday's final was marred by controversy after three-peat defending champions PIC Insurance Liberta Blackhawks were barred from contesting the final by the ABCA.

ABCA's president Leon "Kuma" Rodney had announced on Saturday evening that the Liberta Blackhawks breached the competition rules in securing a 10-wicket victory over Empire Nation in the semi-finals earlier in the day and will not be contesting the final on Sunday.

Rodney accused Liberta of using an ineligible player and therefore forfeited the match to Empire Nation. Liberta communicated their displeasure with the decision and informed the ABCA of their intention to travel to New Winthorpes and contest the final.

However, when Liberta showed up to play the final, police officers removed the Blackhawks players from

the playing field in New Winthorpes.

The Lions and Empire Nation then proceeded to play the final match to decide the champions of the 40-over a side one-day competition.

In Saturday's semi-finals, the Empire Nation were dismissed by the Blackhawks for 129 in 34.3 overs after winning the toss and opting to bat at Ball Beef in Liberta.

Opener Zianni Da Silva hit 37 off 43 balls, and Damian Lowenfield struck 26 off 55 balls. Leg-spinner Hayden Walsh Jr. grabbed three for 13, left-arm spinner Kadeem Phillip snapped up two wickets for four runs, and captain and off-spinner Rahkeem "Jimbo" Cornwall claimed two for 24.

In reply, openers Rivaldo Clarke and Kofi James hit unbeaten half-centuries as the Blackhawks achieved victory by scoring 131 without losing any wickets in 8.1 overs.

Clarke slammed 72 not out off 25 balls, including 10 fours and three sixes. James struck 55 not out off 25 balls, including 10 fours and two sixes.

The New Winthorpes Lions booked their spot in the final with a six-wicket victory against the Pigotts Crushers in the other semi-final at the New Winthorpes playing field.

The Crushers were dismissed for 115 in 28.4 overs after losing the toss and being sent in to bat. Joshua Grant hit 42 off 48 balls. Ian Eusebe grabbed four for 17, and Orandel Boston picked up three for 15.

The Lions achieved victory by scoring 121 for four in 24.3 overs. Bartlette Henry hit 62 not out off 62 balls, including seven fours and three sixes.

Opener Jermaine Ottos scored 27 off 19 balls, and Greg Skepple struck 22 not out. Fast bowler Glen Williams captured two for 25.